

Message Text

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SUBJECT: POSSIBLE US CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN LAND TENANCY
ISSUES IN NUEVO CASAS GRANDES

REF: 048

1. ON FEBRUARY 21 EJIDATARIOS OF THE EJIDO CASAS GRANDES AND CAMPESINOS OF THE CONFEDERACION CAMPESINA INDEPENDIENTE INVADED "EL ALAMITO", A SMALL RANCH IN NUEVO CASAS GRANDES OWNED BY REY WHETTEN, REPORTED TO BE U.S. CITIZEN BUT WHOSE NATIONALITY NOT YET CONFIRMED. THE RANCH IS LOCATED WITHIN THE 112,000 HECTARE RECTANGLE WHICH THE EJIDATARIOS CLAIM CONSTITUTES THE EJIDO CASAS GRANDES. ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER REPORTS, CONFIRMED IN CONVERSATION WITH LIC. FERNANDO FLORES GARZA, LEGAL ADVISER OF THE LOCAL OFFICE OF AGRARIAN REFORM, AGRARIAN LEADERS OF NUEVO CASAS GRANDES HAVE SET MARCH 21 AS THE DEADLINE FOR OCCUPYING ALL THE PROPERTIES WHICH THEY REGARD TO BE WITHIN THE EJIDO CASAS GRANDES.

2. ON DAY OF LAND INVASION, THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL, LIC. ALBERTO RICO GONZALEZ; THE CHIEF OF POLICE, COL. ROBERTO MARTINEZ NORIEGA; AND AN OFFICER OF THE LOCAL MILITARY GARRISON OF CHIHUAHUA CITY WENT TO CASAS GRANDES WITH VIEW TO OBTAINING COURT ORDER TO FORCE THE CAMPESINOS OFF WHETTEN'S RANCH. HOWEVER, THE JUDGE OF THE COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE COULD NOT BE REACHED. THERE IS PRESS REPORT TODAY THAT TROOPS HAVE
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BEEN SENT TO NUEVO CASAS GRANDES TO EVICT LAND INVADERS FROM

WHETTON'S PROPERTY. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT WHETTEN HAS VALID TITLE TO HIS RANCH, SIGNED BY PRESIDENT OF MEXICO AS WELL AS HEAD OF AGRARIAN REFORM.

3. LIC. FLORES GARZA OF THE CIUDAD JUAREZ OFFICE OF AGRARIAN REFORM, SPOKE OUT AGAINST LAND INVASION AS A MEANS OF RESOLVING AGRARIAN PROBLEMS. "WE ARE ADHERENTS OF THE VIEW OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA THAT AGRARIAN PROBLEMS MUST BE RESOLVED BY LEGAL MEANS AND THROUGH DIALOGUE." HE SAID THAT THE PROPERTIES IN QUESTION WOULD PASS TO THE EJIDATARIOS IF THEY CAN THROUGH LEGAL MEANS OBTAIN A NULLIFICATION OF THE CERTIFICATES OF INAFFECTABILITY. HOWEVER, THE EJIDATARIOS TAKE A DIFFERENT VIEW. IN 1964, THEN PRESIDENT LOPEZ MATEOS ALLOTTED 68,393 HECTARES (OUT OF 112,000 HECTARES) TO THE EJIDO CASAS GRANDES. THE EJIDATARIOS POINT OUT THAT SUBSEQUENT TO THAT ACTION THE GOM ISSUED A DECREE DECLARING NULL AND VOID ALL LAND TITLES ISSUED IN 1964 WHICH BORE THE SIGNATURE OF LOPEZ MATEOS, AS IT BECAME KNOWN THAT MANY OF THOSE TITLES HAD BEEN FALSIFIED. THEY THEREFORE CONTEND THAT SINCE ALL LAND TITLES GRANTED IN 1964 IN CASAS GRANDES WERE DECLARED NULL AND VOID, THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO ALL PROPERTIES WHICH LIE WITHIN THE 112,000 HECTARE ZONE, WHICH HAD BEEN COMMUNAL LAND BEFORE THE FORMATION OF EJIDO CASAS GRANDES IN 1964.
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